

Jay Cooke Home

Put-in-Bay, Gibraltar Island

One of Jay Cooke's popular sobriquets was the "Napoleon of Finance." Like the diminutive Corsican, Cooke was brilliant and daring in his campaigns—although his were monetary, not military. His Civil War bond selling campaigns gave important financial support to the Union cause. An idea of the scope of his influence is gleaned from the fact that his banking firm's failure caused the national financial panic of 1873. Cooke was forced to sell this Italianate stone house on Gibraltar Island in Lake Erie, where he had summered since 1865. "Our Modern Midas," as he was also called, later recovered his fortune and repurchased the house in 1880. His last entry in the property's record book states "God be praised for the happiness we have enjoyed here." Cooke died a year later, in 1905. The island is now owned by Ohio State University, and his house is a men's dormitory.